

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 /063 W

-----171746Z 042631 /45

R 171451Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3372

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0432

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, NS

SUBJ: SURINAM AND THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR MAY 17, ACTING DEFENSE MINISTER EDDY HOOST SAID THAT HE BELIEVED GOVERNMENT OF SURINAM (GOS) WOULD TAKE DECISION ON JOINING INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD (IADB) WITHIN NEXT SIX MONTHS AND HE HOPED THAT DECISION WOULD BE AFFIRMATIVE.

2. HOOST RECALLED HIS CONVERSATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF IADB IN WASHINGTON IN FEBRUARY AND VISIT OF IADB CHAIRMAN LTGEN SUMNER TO SURINAM IN APRIL AND SAID HE PERSONALLY WAS IN FAVOR OF JOINING. AS A MATTER OF POLICY, HOWEVER, SURINAM WAS OPPOSED TO MILITARY BLOCS AND WOULD NOT JOIN A MILITARY BLOC ITSELF. QUESTION OF IADB MEMBERSHIP, AND SIGNATURE OF RIO TREATY, THEREFORE TURNS ON WHETHER TREATY SETS UP A MILITARY BLOC OR NOT. SINCE THERE IS NO COMMON MILITARY FORCE SET UP UNDER RIO TREATY, SUCH AS EXISTS IN NATO AND WARSAW PACT, IT IS HIS OWN JUDGMENT THAT INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM IS NOT A MILITARY BLOC AND SURINAM SHOULD FEEL FREE TO JOIN IT. TO EXTENT THERE IS CRITICISM WITHIN SURINAM OF THIS MOVE HE WILL ARGUE THAT IT IS BETTER TO JOIN AND USE SURINAM'S INFLUENCE TO PREVENT IADB FROM BECOMING A MILITARY BLOC THAN NOT TO PARTICIPATE AT ALL. HOOST SAID THAT NEXT
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STEP WILL BE PRESENTING HIS PLAN TO PRIME MINISTER ARRON AND CABINET, WHICH MUST TAKE DECISION. HE BELIEVED SIGNATURE OF RIO TREATY WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE SURINAM COULD JOIN IADB, BUT THAT RATIFICATION BY PARLIAMENT WOULD NOT BE REQUIRED.

3. A FURTHER COMPLICATION, ACCORDING TO HOOST, IS FACT THAT EACH MEMBER OF IADB MUST ASSIGN A MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE TO

RESIDE IN WASHINGTON AND ATTEND WEEKLY MEETINGS. MILITARY OFFICERS ARE SO SCARCE AND SO BADLY NEEDED IN SURINAM THAT IT HAS NOT YET BEEN POSSIBLE TO ASSIGN A MILITARY ATTACHE ANYWHERE ABROAD, NOT EVEN IN THE NETHERLANDS WITH WHICH SUIRNAM STILL MAINTAINS A CLOSE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP. IT WOULD BE PROBLEMATIC, THEREFORE, WHETHER SURINAM WOULD ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO ASSIGN A REPRESENTATIVE TO IADB FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, MEMBERSHIP, REGIONAL DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARAMA00432
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770175-0317
Format: TEL
From: PARAMARIBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770548/aaaabptc.tel
Line Count: 71
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 12783d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2486767
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SURINAM AND THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, PORG, NS, IADB, (HOOST, EDDY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/12783d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009